



**The University of Western Ontario  
Department of Sociology**

**SOCIOLOGY 4406G-001  
Media and Gender  
Winter 2026  
In-Person**

**Instructor: Dr. Kaitlynn Mendes, Full Professor**  
**Email: [kmendes4@uwo.ca](mailto:kmendes4@uwo.ca)**

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**Course Description:**

Media and Gender addresses key issues and concerns around how women, men, non-binary, and trans individuals are represented, experience, and engage with various media forms. The course gives students critical tools to assess and critique what they see, read, and hear about gender through the media in their everyday lives.

***Prerequisite(s):*** Registration in third or fourth year of any program.

***Anti-requisite(s):*** [MediaCom 3210F/G](#), [Sociology 4485F/G](#) taken in 2021/2022.

**Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:**

On successful completion of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate understanding of key theoretical and critical concepts and debates around gender, media, representation, ideology, and critical theories.
- Apply relevant theoretical concepts to analyse the ways in which gender is represented in the media.
- Be aware of ways in which scholars and activists have attempted to challenge, resist, and improve narrow gender representations
- Critically analyse the ways gender has been represented in the media through academic essays, reflective writing, and oral presentations.
- Develop well-structured and supported arguments using appropriate academic conventions and scholarly practices.

Contribute to class discussions about gender and media, drawing both from key theoretical concepts and where relevant, personal experiences and observations.

## **Course Material:**

There is no core book for this class. Weekly readings are assigned via Brightspace at no cost to you. Students must have access to a computer and stable internet connection to access the weekly readings.

## **Communication:**

Students are responsible for checking the course Brightspace site (<https://westernu.brightspace.com/d2l/login>) on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class.

The best way to contact me is by email: [kmendes4@uwo.ca](mailto:kmendes4@uwo.ca). Please note that I might take up to three business days to reply to your email.

## **Course Schedule and Readings:**

The full reading list and weekly schedule is available on the course Brightspace site.

Date	Week	Topic
Jan 5, 2026	1	Intro: Why media and gender?
Jan 12, 2026	2	Masculinity and the Media
Jan 19 2026	3	Trans and Queer Identities in the Media
Jan 26, 2026	4	The Gendered Politics of Anger and Voice in Contemporary Media
Feb 2, 2026	5	Student Choice #1:
Feb 9, 2026	6	Tech-facilitated Violence
Feb 16, 2026	7	<b>Spring Reading Week – No Classes</b>
Feb 23, 2026	8	Gender, Activism, and Media Production – Creative Session
March 2, 2026	9	Tradwives and reactionary politics
March 9, 2026	10	#MeToo and Digital Feminist Activism
March 16, 2026	11	Student Choice #2:
March 23, 2026	12	1-1 Meeting to Discuss Assignments
March 30, 2026	13	Course Wrap Up
April 6, 2026	14	Easter Holiday – No Class

## **Method of Evaluation:**

The evaluation methods described in the course outline are essential requirements for the course.

Class Presentations	Assigned in Week 1	35%
Media Production	2 March 2026	15%
Reflective Portfolio	27 March 2026	40%
Attendance	All Term	10%

**Class Presentation:** Students will select a topic and individually or with a partner will deliver a presentation in class (10 minutes per person) assigned in Week 1. Students are expected to ground their presentation in academic theory and apply it to contemporary issues or media forms. Students will also be required to present a one-page summary of their presentation with full bibliography of all sources as well as an AI disclosure statement indicating if or how they used AI for the assignment (500-750 words). If working with a partner, they can also include an accountability statement indicating which part of the presentation they worked on.

Students should draw from a minimum of **five academic sources** for this assignment. Students are particularly encouraged to take a de-colonized approach to the assignment, think about issues of power and privilege, and draw from a wide range of ideas and scholarship, such as that produced by Indigenous scholars and those from the Global South.

Due: Assigned in Week 1 – ongoing throughout the semester

Weight 35%

Submission: in person and via Owl Brightspace

Please note that if for extenuating circumstances, you cannot present on your chosen day, you will be given a chance to record your presentation and deliver it to Professor Mendes within 48 hours with no academic penalty. Professor Mendes reserves the right to deny academic consideration for assignments which are submitted following the end of the period of flexibility. Should students submit their assessment beyond 48 hours past the deadline, a late penalty of 3% per day will be subtracted from the assessed grade. As flexible deadlines are used in this course, requests for academic consideration will not be granted.

**Media Production:** This assignment is designed so that students can complete it in class. Students can work on their own or in a group to produce a feminist artefact. This can be a physical or online artefact such as a zine, poster, leaflet, campaign, or more. The artefact will relate to a topic relating to gender and media. In the past, students have created campaigns to

raise awareness of gender-based violence, the need for menstrual rights, period poverty, equal pay, trans issues, and more. Students are encouraged to be creative in the production of the artefact and will be assessed based on the visual appeal, the concept, and the content. Students must also submit a written statement (250-500 words) explaining the artefact (e.g. where it originated, what it means, its significance, etc). They should also include an AI disclosure statement indicating if or how they used AI for the assignment.

Due: March 2, 2026

Weight 15%

Submission: via main office or Brightspace

Please note that because the submission deadline for this assessment already includes flexibility in the form of the formal submission deadline being one week after the class in which the assignment is complete, Prof. Mendes reserves the right to deny academic consideration for assignments which are submitted following the end of the period of flexibility. Should students submit their assessment beyond the deadline, a late penalty of 3% per day will be subtracted from the assessed grade. As flexible deadlines are used in this course, requests for academic consideration will not be granted.

*Reflective Portfolio:* Students are required to submit a short, written reflection on a minimum of one topic addressed in this course. Students have freedom to be creative in their presentation (e.g. as a diary, a blog, a report, a letter, a video, a collage with commentary). Students are encouraged to draw from personal experiences or observations in these reflections and comment on how information, theories, or ideas discussed in the course resonate (or not) with their lives. Students are given flexibility on what they reflect on, including lectures, required or further readings, or seminar presentations. In the assignment, students can focus on aspects they found particularly interesting, problematic, enlightening, or challenging. Although it is not as formal as an academic essay, students should still draw from a minimum of **two academic sources**. Here, students could address the usefulness/drawbacks/failings of a particular theory or discuss how these theories (do not) relate to their life experiences. Students are particularly encouraged to take a de-colonized approach to the assignment, think about issues of power and privilege, and draw from diverse sources, examples and experiences beyond Europe or the Global North. Recommended length 5-8 pages (1,500-2,000 words).

Due: March 27, 2026

Weight 40%

Submission: via Owl Brightspace

Please note that because the submission deadline for this assessment already includes flexibility in the form of grace days [a 48-hour submission window with no academic penalty], Professor Mendes reserves the right to deny academic consideration for assignments which are submitted following the end of the period of flexibility. Should students submit their assessment beyond 48 hours past the deadline, a late penalty of 3% per day will be subtracted from the assessed grade. As flexible deadlines are used in this course, requests for academic consideration will not be granted.

**Attendance:** Class attendance is expected and students must attend at least 70% of class to pass the course. If you cannot attend a class due to illness or other reasons please inform Professor Mendes ahead of time. This course has 11 days of class/contact time where you are marked as present or absent. If you attend at least 10 classes, you will get full marks. Academic consideration will not be granted for missed days.

Due: All term

Weight 10%

Submission: in person

Please note that because the submission deadline for this assessment already includes flexibility in the form of needing to attend only 10 classes to get full marks, Professor Mendes reserves the right to deny academic consideration for classes that are missed.

Instructors are permitted to designate one assessment per course per term as requiring supporting documentation to receive academic consideration. For this course the following assessment has been designated as requiring supporting documentation: *Reflective Portfolio, due March 27<sup>th</sup>*.

### **Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI):**

Within this course, students are permitted to use AI tools exclusively for information gathering and preliminary research purposes. These tools are intended to enhance the learning experience by providing access to diverse information sources. However, it is essential that students critically evaluate the obtained information, exercise independent thinking, and engage in original research to synthesize and develop their own ideas, arguments and perspectives. The use of AI tools can serve as a starting point for exploring a topic, with students expected to uphold academic integrity by appropriately attributing all sources of information and avoiding plagiarism. Essays, written assignments and/or lab reports should reflect the

student's own thoughts and independent written work. Students should also generate their own figures (e.g., graphs, diagrams) rather than using AI generated ones. By adhering to these guidelines, students contribute to a responsible and effective learning environment that promotes critical thinking, independent inquiry and all them to produce original written contributions. The same principles also apply to the use of translation software to support the writing the essays and other written assessments.

### **Electronic Devices:**

Students may bring and use technology such as laptops in class to take notes, follow along with course material, and access the internet when prompted. In some cases, students might be asked to access their phone and social media platforms. This, however, is not mandatory.

**Academic Offences:** Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following website: [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_undergrad.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<https://www.turnitin.com/>).

Students are expected to retain all research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used in preparing assignments. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, your instructor may ask you to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against you.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

**Copyright:** Students may not record or distribute any class activity, including conversations during office hours, without written permission from the instructor, except as necessary as part of approved accommodations for students with disabilities. Any approved recordings may only be used for the student's own private use.

**Absence from Course Commitments:** Students must familiarize themselves with the [Policy on Academic Consideration](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf) – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/academic\\_consideration\\_Sep24.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/academic_consideration_Sep24.pdf)

Students missing course work for medical, compassionate or extenuating circumstances can request academic consideration by completing a request using the Student Absence Portal (SAP) [https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic\\_considerations/index.html](https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academic_considerations/index.html) . Students are permitted one academic consideration request per course per term without supporting documentation. Note that supporting documentation is always required for academic consideration requests for examinations scheduled by the office of the registrar (e.g. December and April exams) and for practical laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled during the last week of the term. Students should also note that the instructor may designate one assessment per course per term that requires supporting documentation. This designated assessment is described in the course outline. Supporting documentation for academic considerations for absences due to illness must include the completed Western Student Medical Certificate (SMC) <https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/pdfs/student-medical-certificate.pdf> or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation by a health care practitioner. Students must request academic consideration as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

Once the request and supporting documentation have been received and reviewed, appropriate academic consideration, if granted, shall be determined by the instructor in consultation with the academic advisor, in a manner consistent with the course outline. Students with an approved absence from an in-class test or exam will be required to write a makeup exam, unless otherwise specified in the course outline. The course instructor or teaching assistant(s) may not be available to respond to questions during the makeup text/exam. Students should be aware that the make-up test/exam will not necessarily be in the same format, be of the same duration, or cover the same material as the original test/exam.

**Note:** missed work can *only* be excused through one of the mechanisms above. Being asked not to attend an in-person course requirement due to potential COVID-19 symptoms is **not** sufficient on its own. Students should check the Western website to see what directives for Covid are to be followed. Western has been and will continue to follow directives established by the Middlesex-London Health Unit. That directive will state whether students should or should not come to campus/class and any other requirements (e.g., masks are mandatory). Please check on your own and do not email the instructor, the Department Undergraduate Advisor/Coordinator or the Faculty Academic Counselling Office.

Students who fail to write a make-up test or special examination will receive a grade of zero on that assessment. No other make-up opportunities will be provided unless further academic consideration is granted by the student's Home Faculty Academic Counselling office.

**Religious Accommodation:** Students should review the policy for Accommodation for Religious Holidays [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_religious.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_religious.pdf). Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but not later than two weeks prior to writing the examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

**Contingency plan for an in-person class pivoting to 100% online learning:** In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence or University approved emergency during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, affected course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL Brightspace for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will **not** change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor.

**Code of Student Conduct:** It is the responsibility of every student to read the Code and familiarize him or herself with its contents. The Code is available at [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/code\\_of\\_conduct.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/code_of_conduct.pdf). Sanctions for non-compliance range from a warning or reprimand to expulsion from the University.

**Student Responsibility:** Students in a degree program must select courses in accordance with the published requirements. Students are responsible for ensuring that their selection of courses is appropriate and accurately recorded, that all course prerequisites have been successfully completed, and



that they are aware of any antirequisite course(s) they may have taken. Students must familiarize themselves with the Student Responsibility for Course Selection policy [https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/general/academic\\_counselling.pdf](https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/general/academic_counselling.pdf) and the Registration and Progression policy [https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/registration\\_progression\\_grad/registration\\_progression.pdf](https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/registration_progression_grad/registration_progression.pdf). Students are responsible for the successful completion of the Graduation Requirements for their degree program [https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/registration\\_progression\\_grad/graduation.pdf](https://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/registration_progression_grad/graduation.pdf).

## **Support Services:**

Office of the Registrar Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

[Faculty Academic Advising](#) - Please visit your Home Faculty Academic advising webpage for information regarding adding/dropping courses, important dates, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters [https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty\\_academic\\_counselling.html](https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html).

[USC services](#) offers information about student the health/dental plan, Bus Pass, food support services, Peer support Centre etc <http://westernusc.ca/services/>.

[Mental health](#) – Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

[Health & Wellness Services](#) – Registered part-time and full-time students can book a physical health appointment at <https://www.uwo.ca/health/shs/index.html>. Additional on-campus services are also available <https://www.uwo.ca/health/shs/services/index.html>.

[Accessible Education](#) provides supports and services to students with disabilities at Western, in all programs and faculties. Students with disabilities or accessibility challenges should work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) [http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible\\_education/index.html](http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/index.html), which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing.

[Gender-Based and Sexual Violence](#) – Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experience GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: [http://uwo.ca/health/student\\_support/survivor\\_support/get-help.html](http://uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html)

[Western Libraries](#) – Visit the many library locations on campus. Western Libraries provide access to material in physical and digital formats <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/catalogue/index.html>. Research support is available <https://www.lib.uwo.ca/research/index.html>.

[Writing support](#) – Online writing resources, writing support and writing modules are available <https://writing.uwo.ca/undergrads/>

**Bookstore:** Search for Textbook availability and cost <https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search>